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SOURCE Newspapers as indicated.

TURKISH LABOR CONFEDERATION ACTIVITIES

Comment: The continued growth of the labor movement in Turkey during the last 2 years has resulted in the formation of a nationwide confederation, the details of which were . The following information, based on various Turkish newspapers for the period 17 August - 2 December 1952, gives further details on the confederation, its officers and programs, and problems facing the labor movement.

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On 20 November, Ulus reported that the administrative committee of Turk-Is (Confederation of Turkish Workers Syndicates) was meeting in Ankara, attended by the following persons: Ismail Ihan, Turk-Is president; Muammer Ozerkan, Turk-Is secretary general; Ismail Aras; Adil Bogakaptan, president of the Ismir Maritime Workers Syndicate; Recep Kirim, Zekeriya Gokturk, president of the Icel Textile Industry Workers Syndicate; Yusuf Sidal; I. Tekin, N. Geylan; Mehmet Ilhanli; Fethi Mate; and Naci Tekin.(1)

Following the end of the meeting on 21 November, according to Yeni Sabah of 22 November, the committee announced an eight-point working program as follows: (a) elimination of defects in existing labor legislation, (b) recommendation of new laws; (c) prevention of unemployment; (d) initiation of an organizing campaign; (e) organizing branches of labor not now organized; (f) reform of propaganda and publication affairs; (g) establishment of relations with foreign labor organizations; and (h) establishment of a Turk-Is bank. The paper said the committee had also decided to request the Labor Ministry to turn over to the confederation fines levied against workers under Article 30 of the Labor Law.(2) In connection with point (g) above, Cumhuriyet reported on 23 November that Turk-Is had formally requested the Labor Ministry to obtain cabinet approval for Turk-Is to join the ILO.(3)

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In its article on the meeting, Ulus reported that Inan, in speaking of the government's proposed strike bill, declared that the confederation was opposed to this bill because of its limited nature, and said that the confederation would prepare a new strike bill for submission to the government, which would incorporate the views of labor organizations and labor specialists. The paper also reported that Bogakaptan had revealed an agreement between the Izmir Chamber of Industry and the Union of Izmir Workers Syndicates, which calls for the establishment of a joint commission to consider disputes arising between workers and employees. Bogakaptan was also quoted as expressing the hope that the system would be extended to other parts of Turkey.(1)

As of 2 December, the confederation consisted of 14 unions and federations, representing 200,000 workers, according to Zafei of that date.(4) Ankara Telgraf reported on 17 August that the Samsun Isci Sendikaları Federasyonu (Samsun Federation of Worker Syndicates), which includes all coastal worker syndicates, and the Akdeniz Isci Sendikaları Federasyonu (Federation of Mediterranean Worker Syndicates) had voted to join the confederation.(5) [The nomenclature here would seem to be wrong. The term federation is used in the Turkish labor movement to denote a grouping of syndicates in the same branch of endeavor, while a grouping of syndicates in a given area is called a union of syndicates. The two above-mentioned organizations should be called unions of syndicates, unless new usages for the terms have been introduced.]

On 29 October, En Son Dakika reported that Turk-Is, after less than 2 months of regular activity, was in the midst of an internal conflict. The dispute, according to the paper, arose in connection with the sending to the US ten Turkish labor leaders for 6 to 12 months' training in union leadership under Turk-Is auspices and with Marshall Plan aid. The paper reported that at its meeting on 27 October, the Istanbul Union of Workers Syndicates denounced the undemocratic method of selecting the ten men, the criticism being directed especially at Ismail Aras, and voted to send a protest telegram to Turk-Is, inviting the members of the executive committee to resign and to convvoke a new congress. The paper commented that Seyfi Demirsoy, president of the union, will have to sign the wire even though he is one of the ten selected to go to the US.(6) On 2 November, the same paper reported that the Istanbul organization had decided to instruct its representative on the administrative committee to announce the union's lack of confidence in the committee at its next meeting. The paper also reported that the administrative committee of Meteyif (Turkiye Muskirat, Tutun ve Yardimci Isci Sendikaları Federasyonu, Federation of Turkish Intoxicants, Tobacco, and Auxiliary Worker Syndicates) had also discussed the matter and decided to register a harsh protest, including a request that the committee resign. According to the newspaper, the Meteyif committee had no objection to the ten men chosen but only to the method of their selection. En Son Dakika explained that the real reason for the furor was the fact that Muammer Ozerkan had informed each of the ten leaders involved of his selection by a letter which was marked secret. This meant that the parent organizations of these men would not have known of the matter until after they had left for the US, if the matter had not come to light accidentally.(7)

One task currently being undertaken by Turk-Is, according to En Son Dakika of 22 September, involves persuading all Turkish syndicates to standardize the method of electing officials, in accordance with Article 3 of the confederation's regulations, which reads: "If differences exist between the Turk-Is regulations and those of its member organizations, the member organizations, professional federations, local unions of syndicates, and individual syndicates will modify their regulations." The following is a summary of the remainder of the paper's comments:

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"General assemblies (annual congresses) are the most authoritative organs of Turkish labor organizations, and one of their most important duties is the election of delegates to the confederation. However, there are many different methods used in electing these delegates, as well as in electing administrative and other committees.

"In some syndicates, a person needs only 5 percent of the votes cast for election, while in others, more than 50 percent is required and some require a two-thirds majority. In some syndicates, the president, vice-president, and secretary are elected directly by the general assembly and exert a great influence on the administrative committee; while in others, the administrative committee elects its officers from among its own members. Syndicate groupings such as federations and unions of syndicates also use various methods to determine how many members of member syndicates shall be represented in the federation (or union) general assembly by one delegate.

"There are two principal reasons for the variety of systems used: (a) the personal views of the founder of the syndicate, and (b) the method used in the first election of a newly founded syndicate."(8)

Another problem facing the Turkish labor movement, according to En Son Dakika of 21 August, involves the development of a cadre of paid, professional syndicate leaders who are capable of administering their organizations properly. According to the paper, two opposing ideas are current: (a) syndicalism today is a sacrifice, and workers holding syndicate offices must make the necessary material sacrifices; and (b) sacrifices must be shared by all, and syndicate treasuries must make up the wages lost by workers because of syndicate duties. The prob'lem is increasing, the paper continued, as central labor organizations are established, thereby increasing the duties of labor administrators and making it impossible for them to continue their jobs. According to the paper, the regulations of Turk-Is and of some federations state explicitly that the president and secretary may receive wages. In most cases, stated the paper, officials receive not a fixed amount but the equivalent of their former wages; this also applies to the officers of some individual syndicates.(9)

In 16 and 21 September, En Son Dakika published, respectively, short biographical sketches of Ismail Inan and Muammer Ozerkan summaries of which are given below:

"Inan's trade union activity began in 1948 when, with a few friends, he established and was elected first president of a Garsonlar Sendikası (Waiters' Syndicate), which has now developed into the Hotel, Restaurant and Amusement Places Workers Syndicate. Later, he served as accountant of the Istanbul Union of Syndicates. On losing his job as a result of employer pressure, he withdrew from union activities temporarily, until 1951, when he became, successively, a member of his own syndicate's administrative committee, a member of the administrative committee of the Istanbul Union of Syndicates, and president of Toleyis (Turkiye Otel, Lokanta ve Eglence Yerleri Isci Sendikaları Federasyonu, Federation of Turkish, Hotel, Restaurant, and Amusement Places Workers' Syndicates). At the first Turk-Is congress in Izmir, in the first week of September, he was elected president of the confederation by a two thirds vote on the third ballot, winning over his closest rival, Malmut Yuksel, president of the Maritime Workers Federation, who, together with other aspirants, had begun a campaign weeks before, while Inan remained completely aloof.(10)

"Ozerkan studied 4 years at the Urfa Trade School and then finished his education at the Aydin Trade School. He taught for a time at a village institute in Trabzon Province, and, after completing his military service, became a technical teacher at various schools in Turkey. He joined the

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Textile Workers Syndicate [location not given], and became its paid secretary and then a member of the central executive committee. He has been active in Ankara in the Turkish Cultural Society and in the Young Poets Society. He has written considerable poetry, some of which has been published."(11)

SOURCES

1. Ankara, Ulus, 20 Nov 52
2. Istanbul, Yeni Sabah, 22 Nov 52
3. Istanbul, Cumhuriyet, 23 Nov 52
4. Ankara, Zafer, 2 Dec 52
5. Ankara, Ankara Telgraf, 17 Aug 52
6. Istanbul, En Son Dakika, 29 Oct 52
7. Ibid., 2 Nov 52
8. Ibid., 22 Sep 52
9. Ibid., 21 Aug 52
10. Ibid., 16 Sep 52
11. Ibid., 21 Sep 52

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